

THE
SPEECH
OF THE
Earl of ARGYLE

AT HIS
TRIAL

On the 12th. of December 1681.

My Lord Justice General and Remanent Honourable Lords of Justiciary

I Look upon it as the undoubted Privilege of the meanest Subject, to explain his own words in the most benign Sense.

And even when Persons are under an evil Character, the misconstruction of words, in themselves not ill, can only amount to Presumption or Aggravation, and not a Crime.

But it is strangely alledged (as well as impossible to make any that knows me believe) that I could intend any thing, but what was honest and honourable, suitable to the Principles of my Religion and Loyalty, though I did not explain my self at all.

My Lord, pray be not offended, that I take up a little of your time to tell you, I have from my youth made it my business to serve his Majesty faithfully; and have constantly to my power, appeared in his service, especially in all times of difficulty; and have never joyned, nor complied with any Interest or Party, contrary to his Majesties Authority, but have all along served him in his own way, without a frown from his Majesty these thirty years.

As soon as I passed the Schools and Colledges, I went to travel to France and Italy in the beginning of the year 1647. and continued abroad till the end of the year 1649.

My first appearance in the World, was to serve his Majesty, as Collonel of his Foot-guard; and though at that time all the Commissions were given by the then Parliament, yet I would not serve without a Commission from his Majesty, which I have still the Honour to have by me.

After the misfortune of Worcester, I continued in Arms for his Majesties service, when Scotland was overrun with the Usurpers, and was alone with some of my Friends in Arms, in the year 1652. and did then keep up some appearance of Opposition to them by taking several of the Castles they had garriſoned in Argyle-shire; and taking and killing three hundred of them in one day. After which, I joyned with those his Majesty had Commissioned, and stood out to the last, till the Earl of Middleton his Majesties Lieutenant General gave me order to capitulate, which I did without any other engagement to the Rebels, but bail to live peaceably; and did at my capitulating, relieve several Prisoners by exchange, whereof my Lord Graue out of the Castle of Edenborough was one.

Is it not well known that I was imprisoned by the Usurpers, who was so jealous of me, that contrary to their faith, they seized on me, and kept me from Prison to Prison, till his Majesties happy Restauration, only because I would not engage nor to serve him, though there was no Oath required?

I do with all Gratitude acknowledge his Majesties Bounty and Royal Favours to me when I was pursued before the Parliament in the year 1662. His Majesty was graciously pleased not to send me down in any opprobrious way, but upon a bare verbal Bail, upon which I came down Post, and presented my self a fortnight before the time; and having satisfied his Majesty at that time, of my entire Loyalty, I did not offer to plead by Advocates, and his Majesty was not only pleased to pardon my life, and to restore me to a Title and Fortune, but to put me in trust in his Service in the most eminent Judicatories of the Kingdom; and to heap Favours upon me beyond whatever I did, or can deserve, though I hope his Majesty hath always found me faithful and thankful, and ready to bestow all I have, or can have, for his Service; and I hope he never had, nor never shall have ground to repent any Favour he hath done me: If I were now guilty of the four Crimes libelled, I should think my self a great Villian.

In the Prosecution of the Story of my Life in the year 1666. when the Rebellion broke out, that was repressed at *Pentland Hills*, upon a bare Advertisement from the now Lord Archbishop *St. Andrews*, without any order either from the Council or General, the Intercourse being stopped, did I not bring together about two thousand men, and sent a Gentleman to General *Dailyel*, offering to joyn with him, if the Rebellion had not presently been happily crushed? And when I met with considerable trouble from my Neighbours rebelliously in Arms, and had Commissions both in publick and private accounts, have I not carried dutifully to his Majesty, and done what was commanded with a just Moderation, which I can prove under the Hands of mine Enemies, and by many infallible Demonstrations?

Pardon me yet a few words. Did I not in this present Parliament shew my readiness to serve His Majesty and the Royal Family in asserting vigorously the Lineal Legal Succession of the Crown, and had a care to have it expressed in the Commissions of the Shires and Boroughs in which I had interest? Was I not for offering proper supplies to His Majesty and his Successor? And did I not concur to bind the Landlords for their Tenants, though I was mainly concerned? And have I not always keep'd my Tenants in obedience to His Majesty?

I say all this, not to arrogate any thing to my self for doing what I was in Honour and Duty bound to his Majesty; But if after all this, upon no other ground, but words that were spoken in absolute Innocence, and without the least design, except for clearing my own Conscience, and that are not capable of the ill sense wrested from them by the Libel, I should be further troubled, what assurance can any of the greatest Quality, Trust, or Innocence have, that they are secure, especially considering, that so many scruples have been started, as all know, not only by many of the Orthodox Clergy, but by whole Presbyteries, Synods, and some Bishops, which were thought so considerable, that an eminent Bishop did take the pains to write a Treatise (which was read in Council, and allowed to be Printed, and a Copy given to me), which contains expressions that may be stretched to a worse sense than I am charged for. Have I not shewed my Zeal to all the ends of the Test? How then can it be imagined, that I have any sinister design in any thing that I have said? If I had done any thing contrary to the whole course of my Life, which I hope shall not be found, yet one Act might pretend to be excused by a Habit. But nothing being questioned but the sense of words misconstrued to the greatest height, and stretched to imaginaty inclinations, quite contrary to my scope and design; and so far contrary, not only to my Sense, but Principles, Interest and Duty, that I hope my Lord Advocate will think he hath gone too far in this Process, and say plainly what he knows to be true by his acquaintance with me, both in publick and private, that I am neither *Papist* nor *Phanatick*, but am truly Loyal in my Principles and Practice.

The hearing of this Libel would trouble me beyond most of the Sufferings of my Life, if my Innocence did not support me, and the hopes of being vindicated of this and other calumnies before this publick and Noble Auditory.

I leave my Defences to these Gentlemen that plead for me: They know my Innocence, and how groundless that Libel is. I shall only say, As my Life has been most of it spent in serving and suffering for his Majesty, so whatever be the event of this process, I resolve, while I breathe, to be loyal and faithful to his Majesty; and whether I live publicly or in obscurity, my head, my heart, nor my hand, shall never be wanting where I can be useful to his Majesties service; and while I live, and when I die, I shall pray, that God Almighty would bless His Majesty with a long, happy and prosperous Reign, and that the Lineal Legal Successors of the Crown, may continue Monarchs over all His Majesties Dominions, and be Defenders of the true Primitive Christian Apostolick Catholick Protestant Religion, while Sun and Moon endure.